

Russian River Water Forum Update

Board of Public Utilities Meeting
May 4, 2023

Jennifer Burke – Santa Rosa Water Director

Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project

- ~9.4 MW hydroelectric project owned and operated by PG&E, In operation for more than 100 years
- On average, 60,000 acre-feet (AF) of water transferred from Eel River into Upper Russian River watershed
- PG&E decided not to re-license the project, going through license surrender and decommissioning process
- Without transfer of water, 8 out of 10 years not enough water to meet all the needs of the upper Russian River
- In 2 of those 8 years, Lake Mendocino predicted to go dry

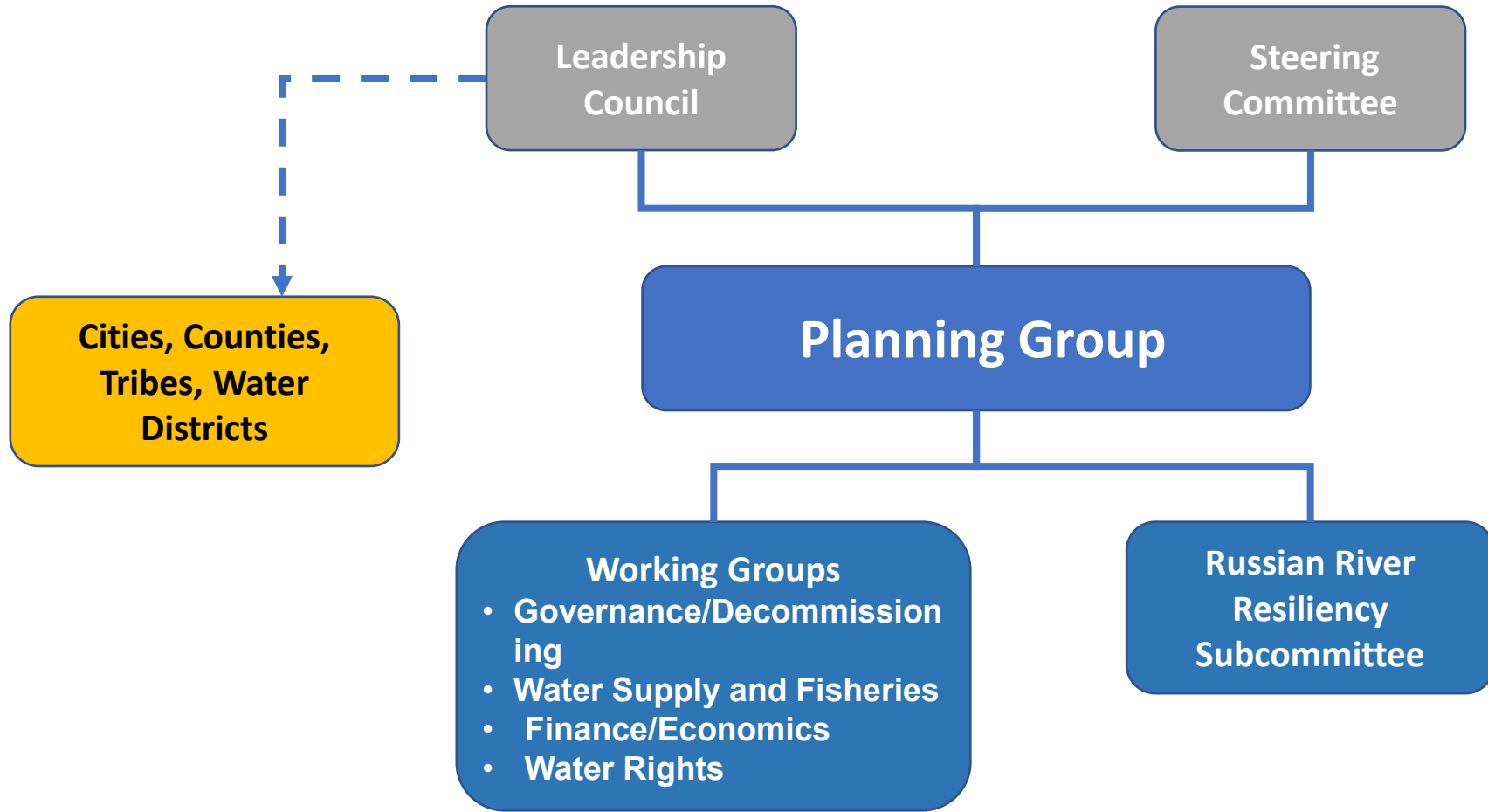


Russian River Water Forum (RRWF)

- Sonoma Water received state grant funding to support water supply resiliency planning and support the creation of the RRWF
- RRWF initially focus on four questions related to PVP decommissioning solutions:
 - Ownership – Who would acquire, modify, and operate these facilities?
 - Water Supply and Fisheries – What PVP facilities would be acquired, how would they be modified, how reliable will the water supply be?
 - Financial – How would the acquisition, modification, and operation be funded?
 - Water Rights – How will water rights be impacted and managed?



Russian River Water Forum Structure



DRAFT



Leadership Council: Elected Officials

- Comprised of Tribal, local, county, state, and federal elected officials or designee
- Leadership Council will consider options and alternatives from the Planning Group
- Share information, build understanding, and strive for consensus
- Provide information and recommendations to their respective governments and constituents
- WAC Chair and WAC Vice Chair participating



Planning Group: Technical Staff

- Lake, Humboldt, Mendocino and Sonoma county governments
- Tribal governments in Russian River and Eel River basins
- Water suppliers
 - Sonoma County Water Suppliers – 6 seats
- Environmental NGOs
- Agriculture interests
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Public and private recreation interests



Sonoma County Water Supplier Caucus

- Caucus discussions outside of Planning Group
- 6 Sonoma County water suppliers
 - North County (member and alternate)
 - West County (member and alternate)
 - Sonoma Water (member and alternate)
 - Water Contractors (3 members and 3 alternates)
- Working group participation
 - Water Supply and Fisheries
 - Finance and Economics
 - Governance and Decommissioning
 - Water Rights



Council Policy Direction

BPU recommended and Council supported the following:

- Support continued flow of water from the Project into the Russian
 - Maintain water supply reliability of the Russian River
 - Support the significant investments made by Sonoma Water and the water contactors in restoration
- Generally support establishment of a Regional Entity to acquire elements of the Project and water rights
- Indicate receptiveness to contributing funding proportional to the benefit received
- Ensure any decisions regarding the continued flow of water from the Project are consistent with the Restructured Agreement for Water Supply
- Continue to seek opportunities for meaningful input on the Russian River Water Forum and water supply resiliency projects evaluation

Next Steps

- Planning Group
 - First meeting: May 17th in Ukiah
 - Working Groups: June
- Sonoma County Water Supplier Caucus
 - Meeting
 - Determining Principles, Objectives, Interests
- Leadership Council
 - Establishing
 - Tentatively Mid to Late Summer for Meeting



Questions?



<https://russianriverwaterforum.org/>